

Running head: UNIT GOALS & RUBRICS

War Unit Goals and Rubrics

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This unit will focus on reading and writing. Through these focuses, students will learn how to analyze text, film, and poetry. We will focus mainly on the Vietnam War, but will discuss many of the wars that our nation has been involved; this will include our current involvement in Iraq. Using a variety of instructional tools and examining several American wars will allow students to garner a complete understanding of the material. One of the final assessments will be based on the students' readings of "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. They will have to complete a pre-writing exercise for a text-based essay and ultimately write an essay where they will draw from this story and other relevant material presented throughout this unit. They will be able to pick an issue, conflict, theme, or motif that interests them. Students will also look at poetry, film, and several websites in regards to war, where they will be able to independently gain an understanding and formulate opinions on topics such as: bravery, truth, effects of war, and symbolism. Students will be assessed on their understanding of poetry and their organization and composition of poetry.

### **Poetry Assessment**

Students will be assessed on their understanding of the poetry they read by creating a poem themselves. Students will be given the suggested topic to write about our current war in Iraq, but may venture away from this topic if they feel strongly about another topic.

Students must:

- Write a poem of at least ten lines.
- Include at least one simile, metaphor, and alliteration.
- Revise their work
- Have a peer edit their work.

- Include graphics and appealing design.
- Review Rubric to be sure everything is complete.
- Print two copies and turn them in on my desk.

### Rubric for Creating Poetry

An A has the following:

- The form of the poem is appropriate to the subject.
- The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the subject in a new way or in a more potent way than ever before.
- Sensory details and figurative language create vivid images that contribute significantly to the meaning of the poem; sound devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, or onomatopoeia, are used effectively and contribute to the meaning of the poem.
- Word choice is vivid and exact throughout.
- There are few or no errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling.

A B has the following:

- The form of the poem is appropriate to the subject.
- The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the subject.
- Sensory details and figurative language contribute to the meaning of the poem; sound devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, or onomatopoeia, also add to the meaning of the poem.
- Most word choices are precise.
- There are some errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling.

A C has the following:

- The form of the poem should be more appropriate to the subject.
- The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the subject, but this is accomplished through clichés, worn out images, or other predictable choices.
- Sensory details and figurative language maybe overused, under used, or inappropriate to the subject; sound devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, or onomatopoeia, may be overused or under used, or they may fail to add to the meaning of the poem.
- Word choices may be vague, repetitive, or imprecise.
- The poem is difficult to understand at times because of errors in mechanics, usage, grammar,

A D or F has the following:

- The form of the poem is not appropriate to the subject.
- The poem does not enable the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the subject.
- There is no use—or consistently confusing or inappropriate use—of sensory details, figurative language, or sound devices.
- Words may be misused or unclear.
- The poem is consistently difficult to understand because of errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling.

(Rubric based on TeacherVisuon.com: Scoring Rubric)

### Scene Analysis

The following framework has been designed to help students analyze the films *Full Metal Jacket*, *We Were Soldiers*, and *Forrest Gump*. Students will be assessed on their understanding of the imagery, symbolism, music, and dialogue. They will also be graded on their proper use of grammar. After the students watch the movie segments, they will answer the following questions:

**Setting**

- Is the setting authentic or constructed? Support your answers.
- When and where does the scene take place?
- How does the director use color in the scene? Are there any colors that stand out? Support your answer.

**Camera**

- Where is the camera in the scene? Is it moving or fixed?
- What is the effect created by moving or positioning the camera in this way?

**Objectives**

- Describe what elements you observe in this scene.
- Are all the elements treated in the same way, i.e., does the camera focus more on some elements than on others? Why?
- What emotion does the combination of all the elements in the scene evoke?

**Characters**

- What characters are involved in the scene?
- What are the connotative and denotative meanings of their dialogue?
- Briefly describe their function in the scene.

**Mood**

- What is the general mood of the scene?
- How do color, camera angles, and movement contribute to this mood?
- What emotions does the director want to convey? In your opinion, is he successful?
- How does the music help convey the mood?

**Conclusion**

Based on your opinion of what the scene is attempting to convey, would you eliminate any elements from this scene? Why?

Rubric for Scene Analysis

An A has the following:

- Questions were answered accurately and were well defined including pertinent details; including a minimum of five references from the films.
- Strong organization; well developed sentences and paragraphs including transitions; excellent introduction and conclusion.

- No errors present in paper; accurate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage; transitions present; sentence variety implemented with rich vocabulary; effective use of references.

A B has the following:

- Answers are clear and defined; using appropriate supporting details; including three references from the films.
- Has generally well formed sentences and paragraphs; introduction and conclusion are clear and supported.
- Few (four or less) errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage; some transitions and sentence variety; acceptable vocabulary; appropriate use of references.

A C has the following:

- Answers are not well defined; few supporting details; contains two references from the films.
- Weak paragraph structure and organization; introduction and conclusion are present but not fully developed.
- Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation and usage are disproportionate to length and complexity; simplistic vocabulary; weak use of references.

A D or F has the following:

- Answers are not clear; limited supporting details; no use of references.
- Little sense of organization; lacks sentence structure and paragraph development; introduction and conclusion are not evident.

- Many errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage; weak/inappropriate vocabulary; does not use references.

**Essay on *The Things They Carried*** (based on a lesson by Victoria Reynolds CSU)

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien deal with the Vietnam War, but they also contain many compelling issues about the human condition unchanged by the 30 years since that conflict. For instance, we have looked at many wars that America has been involved. We have used multiple venues to explore war, such as poetry, film, internet sites, and O'Brien's text. For your unit assessment, you will create an essay in which you draw from these sources. Students will find some issue, conflict, theme, or motif that interests them. This paper should not simply restate what we have studied; students should draw an opinion and be able to properly relate their interpretation in the form of an essay. Students should construct an argument for their particular point of view. Below are several topic choices for you to consider; if students have another topic in mind, please discuss it with the teacher before proceeding. Your essay should refer to and quote from all of the sources reviewed in class (poetry, text, critically reviewed internet sources, and film).

Topics:

1. In "The Things They Carried," O'Brien writes that "Men killed, and died, because they were embarrassed not to" (21). Find three characters from the assigned stories and explain how their actions, attitudes, and beliefs reflect O'Brien's point of view in regards to such issues as masculinity, cowardice, and courage. What are your conclusions regarding the issues O'Brien raises? Use multiple examples from all sources.

2. Why is it so hard to "tell a true war story"? Write an essay in which you examine the use of imagination and invention, and the difficulties posed by wartime conditions on truth-telling.
3. Throughout the unit, juxtaposes images of great beauty with images of great horror, especially seen in many of the films we have viewed. Write an essay in which you trace the use of such contrasting images across the many sources we have seen. What do these contrasting images say about the experiences in Vietnam or in War?
4. We have learned that soldiers deal with the uncertainty, fear, and death around them in sometimes surprisingly tender, irreverently funny, or horrifyingly brutal ways. Choose three significantly different ways that we have seen soldiers deal with the effects of war. Examine how the characters respond to their circumstances and the men around them. What conclusions can you draw about soldiers and war through these examples?
5. People are usually profoundly changed by their experiences in war. Choose three characters from our studies and examine how these characters were changed by their experiences. What conclusions can you draw from these examples about the effects of war on the human spirit?

Rubric for Final Essay (based on Sophia McClennen's Rubrics for essays)

An A has the following:

- Thesis is easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear. Connects well with paper title.
- The structure is clearly evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.



- References/studied materials are used effectively. Primary source information used to support every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences. Demonstrates an in depth understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.
- Author clearly relates evidence to thesis; analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. Work displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.
- All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes), which illuminate thesis.
- Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; no run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in every way to format requirements.

An B has the following:

- Thesis is promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality. Paper title does not connect as well with thesis or is not as interesting.
- The structure is generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.
- Uses examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.
- Evidence often related to thesis, though links perhaps not very clear. Some description, but more critical thinking.
- Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.
- Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice. Conforms in every way to format requirements.

An C has the following:

- Thesis may be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper. Paper title and thesis do not connect well or title is unimaginative.
- The structure is generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.
- Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a general understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and only occasionally critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.
- Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to thesis or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote. Even balance between critical thinking and description.
- Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections.
- Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Some errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have some run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in almost every way to format requirements.

An D or F has the following:

- Thesis is difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.
- The structure is unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.
- Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner. Demonstrates a little/no understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and does not critically evaluate/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.
- Very little, very weak, or no attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to. More description than critical thinking.
- Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views.
- Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices. Does not conform to format requirements.

**Debate Assessment**

To close out the unit, students will be broken in to two separate groups in order to debate favorably for the Vietnam War, and the other should be opposed to the war. Students will be given several class periods to gather information from the sources we have covered in class and outside sources. Students will be given sufficient notice of this assignment, so if they want to plan an interview, bring in a guest speaker, or show a short video clip they will have more than the one day to prepare. Students will gather their information much as they did for their paper. They will be required to cite their critically reviewed sources and turn them in to show justification. Students are not required to turn in a written paper, but are encouraged to plan their arguments thoroughly, and be prepared to use their sources in their debate. Each side must provide specific examples and rationales to support his or her claims either in favor of or against U.S. participation in the Vietnam War. Students will be encouraged to start by summarizing the basic facts of Vietnam (who, when, why, etc.). Students will also need to consider the opposing viewpoints to the war, using images of protestors, or old newspaper headlines.

Rubric for Debate (based on Marjean Hubar lesson plan)

An A has the following:

- Viewpoints and responses are outlined completely clearly and orderly.
- There are many reasons given to support viewpoint.
- There are many relevant supporting examples and facts given.
- Arguments made by the other teams are responded to and dealt with effectively.
- Tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience.

An B has the following:

Viewpoints and responses are mostly clear and orderly.

There are a few reasons given to support viewpoint.

There are few relevant supporting examples and facts given.

Some effective counter arguments are made.

Tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are mostly convincing to audience.

An C has the following:

Viewpoints and responses are clear and orderly in some parts but not all.

Some relevant reasons are given to support viewpoint.

There are minimal relevant supporting examples and facts given.

Minimal effective counter arguments are made.

Minimally uses tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm effectively.

An D or F has the following:

Viewpoints and responses are unclear and irregular in most parts.

No relevant reasons are given to support viewpoint.

There are no relevant supporting examples and facts given.

No effective counter arguments are made.

No proper use of tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm effectively.